

As Manufacturers See It

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new Dunlop sports plant in Westminster, S. C. This most completely modern of all golf goods manufacturing establishments is evidence of our confidence in the bright prospects for pro golf business in 1961 and succeeding years.

Everybody Is Busy Making, Selling Good Equipment

By *Kenneth Smith*

Kenneth Smith Golf Clubs

The most significant thing about 1960 golf business is that everybody that is making very good clubs has been so busy. I understand that the sale of golf shafts has been away ahead of the record breaking number sold in 1959. Thus the industry as a whole is healthy and certainly, in view of the strong demand for quality clubs, the cut price demand hasn't bothered the good pro shops.

Barring wholly unexpected adverse market developments, 1961 will be better, decidedly, than this year in golf business. The theme of successful professional operations no seems to assure continued steady growth of superior quality golf merchandise despite the amount of cheap goods coming onto the market.

Quality Lines Show Largest Pro Sales Increase

By *Ernie Sabayrac*

Pres., Ernie Sabayrac, Inc.

Sales to golfers this year have again proved there is more money for the pro in top quality lines than in merchandise that is subject to severe cut-price competition.

Our 1960 sales thus far show an increase of 26 per cent in Foot-Joy and Ben Hogan shoes, Izod men's sportswear, Haymaker women's sportswear, Flip-It headware, Palm Beach slacks and sports coats and Coberknit rain jackets. The sales increase in Ben Hogan clubs, balls and accessories is 38 per cent ahead of 1959.

Investments made by professionals and clubs in the visual display equipment we handle for Henry Leopold have brought substantial and immediate dividends. Another significant aspect of the year's business has been the excellent credit rating of the professionals who identify themselves with the best merchandise. The cheap market is cut up in a hundred ways

and a pro is out of luck trying to undercut a store that can feature "loss leaders."

With a superior set of irons costing \$150 and a set of woods of the same grade costing \$100, the pro's captive market isn't going to go on buying sprees. However, a high quality golf shirt costing \$10 is bringing money freely out of pockets and giving the customer a value that makes the buy a bargain.

We expect the golf business to show another substantial increase in 1961 primarily because more pros are getting to be better businessmen.

Pros Resist Import Bargains and Increase Quality Sales

By *John W. Sproul*

Sales Mgr., Golf Ball Sales
U. S. Rubber Co.

Final statistics aren't yet available, but indications are that play in 1960 increased more than 10 per cent and overall sales of golf balls through pro shops for the first seven months of the year were up approximately 11 per cent over 1959. Actually, the increase for the very top-price ball was 10.8 per cent, almost identical with the overall increase. This indicates that the professional's sales of top quality equipment of all descriptions are keeping pace with the market in general.

It has been our observation that very few pro merchandisers have fallen for the "imported bargains" offered them. Quality and satisfied customers, and not price, continue to be of paramount interest to them.

The above facts augur well for 1961. With the pro accounting for 78 per cent of sales of top quality balls this year, and considering that he continues to be quality and customer-service conscious, the manufacturer can proceed with confidence in continuing to try to improve his products. With this assurance, U. S. Rubber will go on emphasizing quality in its advertising, promotion and selling in the coming year.

Sales Training Pays Profits to Pros in 1960

By *Bill Kaiser*

Hillerich & Bradshy Co.

This year has brought impressive proof that professionals have learned to capitalize on their expert status in the selection and fitting of playing equipment. The pro shop's inviting appearance reflects the

high standing of the man who operates the shop and induces and helps the customer to buy.

The majority of professionals are hiring assistants who have sound training, fine characters, pleasant personalities, initiative and willingness to work. The PGA business schools at Dunedin and in Los Angeles have been of immeasurable value in training the type of young men golf needs in its business. They have done a great deal toward helping the pros who employ them give clubs the standard and scope of service that the good professional wants to give.

Among other major reasons for 1960 being a very good year is the improved design of woods and irons and better playability. This improvement will accelerate sales next year.

The iron blades have adequate hitting surface for the average player as well as the expert. The shaft flexes make possible precise fitting for all types of men, women and Juniors. Without doubt the uniformity of grip construction, now evident in leading manufacturers' top equipment, has increased the usefulness and value of clubs. The woods are designed to get the ball up and give the average player help in solving that problem from the tee or fairway lies.

Skimping on Course Outdated

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tight and club payments aren't setting any new speed records.

Budgets Are Tight

John Gibbs, Goldthwaites of Texas — Volume of equipment and supply sales has been healthy and stable but profit margins aren't keeping pace so free services are being discontinued. Budgets are tight with clubhouses and other facilities getting first cut at the club revenue. Green Chmn. and officers of clubs are urging supts. to patch up old equipment. Play has increased considerably at private and public courses. With heavier traffic, less maintenance and strong demands for perfect playing conditions, veteran supts. are doing their best and hoping for miracles. New automatic watering systems, lease or lease-purchase programs for new equipment and newer strains of grass may work some of the needed wonders. Course-homesite developments continue to increase and give golfers of moderate income opportunities to enjoy private club atmosphere. Quite a few of these projects are building poor courses due to bad

financial planning. These courses will require extensive rebuilding. Prospects for equipment, supply and material business for 1961 look very good. Money seems to be available from a number of sources for financing new courses.

Don Quick, Jack Dayton and Son, Louisville — This year we have worked harder to get our share of the business and it has increased satisfactorily. Volume of play in this area is up 15 to 20 per cent over 1959. Budgets always are too small but that gives us room for increasing sales as the constantly increasing number of golfers are constantly demanding improvement in playing conditions that in most cases are very good. The larger clubs have been paying promptly.

Tiffine 328 Improves Play

Reg Perry, Turtaid, Inc., Memphis — Eight new courses have opened for play in this area this year and three more are under construction. One club being built has two 18-hole courses. Volume of play has increased from about 25 to 30 per cent. Collections have been about as usual. The homesite operation, we believe, is due to become more popular, especially in larger cities. Introduction of Tiffine 328 Bermuda in Southern greens has meant new and different maintenance methods and improved playing conditions that will help account for greater play, better maintenance methods and more golf business in 1961.

George Cornell, G. L. Cornell Co., Bethesda, Md. — Weather conditions and turf have been good in this area. Maintenance budgets were about same as last year with adjustments for increased labor costs. Play increased greatly and continues to increase. This means that getting work done quickly is an important problem and directs attention of supt. and chmn. to the urgent necessity of equipment that will give results fast and economically. Course-homesite projects that are properly financed are bound to succeed in this district.

Byron Reed, E. Baltz & Son, Portland, Ore. — Golf course business here is much better than last year. Turf conditions are better. More fairway fertilizing than ever before. Supts. assns. in Oregon have been invaluable to golfers, their clubs and to the supts. themselves. There has been wider hiring of good architects for new courses. Budgets are increasing for new method machines, replacement of worn and obsolete equipment and fertilization. Payment of bills is very good. We are watching with interest two course-home-